

Navy ‘stars’ in Hollywood blockbuster

JO2 Jim Williams
News Editor

There was an unusual amount of applause breaking out during the film “Tears of the Sun,” shown at the Marine Corps Base Hawai’i movie theater in Kaneohe on March 6, as two SH-60B “Seahawk” helicopters flew on screen.

The applause came from Sailors of the Helicopter Anti-Submarine (HSL) Squadron Light 37, SEAL Delivery Team (SDV) One and representatives from other local commands who were attending a ‘sneak preview’ of the new film starring Bruce Willis one day before it opened to the general public. But this wasn’t just any sneak preview. Many of these Sailors participated in the \$90 million movie.

“It was a real rush to see myself on screen,” said Senior Chief Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (AW) Calvin Mickey from HSL-37, who appeared as a helicopter crewmember in the film. “It was really exhilarating, especially since it turned out to be such a great movie.”

In the film, directed by Antoine Fuqua (“Training Day” and “The Replacement Killers”), Willis stars as a Navy SEAL leading his unit on a search and rescue mission into the jungles of Nigeria to rescue a stranded doctor and three other Americans before coupling guerrilla terrorists kill them. When they get to the village, the doctor says that she’ll only leave if the refugees in the village can go also. Willis’ character finds himself deeply conflicted at having to choose between following the original orders or following his own conscience. The movie that follows tells the story of the SEALs trying to reach their rendezvous point before the several hundred African soldiers on their tail catch up with them.

“Most everybody in there seemed to think it was an excellent movie,” said Mickey. “It’s great anytime you can wave the flag and say how well the mili-



U.S. Navy photo

AWCS (SW) Randy Gillet, from Helicopter Anti-Submarine (HSL) Squadron Light 37, poses with Bruce Willis on the set of “Tears of the Sun.” Gillet was one of many Sailors involved in the film. He played the part of the ‘door-gunner’ in the lead helicopter carrying the SEALs. His flight while filming the movie was his last before retiring.

tary does their job.”

Lt. Cmdr. Karl Erikson from the Pacific Technical Support Group agreed.

“It wasn’t your normal ‘action flick.’ It was definitely more thought provoking,” he said. “Plus, I think it portrayed the Navy in a very positive light.”

The HSL-37 “Easy riders,” who usually work as combat-ready Light Airborne Multi-Purpose System (LAMPS) detachments to the ships of the

Pacific fleet surface force, served as helicopter pilots and crews for the “SEALs” in the film.

“It was really cool to see our squadron ‘birds’ flying and to see our guys on screen,” said Lt. Greg Zimmerman from HSL-37. “They did a really great job portraying the Navy and showing what we do.”

Real SEALs from SDV Team One here in Hawai’i worked on the set of the film providing minimal support and had the

opportunity to be extras.

“It was a good movie,” said Lt. ‘Walt’ Allman, from SDV Team one. “Parts of it were realistic, but some were ‘Hollywood.’”

Most of the rainy jungle scenes supposedly taking place in West Africa were actually filmed here on Oahu.

Production of the “Tears of the Sun” began in late March 2002, after a mock village (including a large church, kitchen and medical tent) was constructed at the Kualoa Ranch valley, in the shadow of the Ko’olau Mountains. Many scenes were also shot at the Maunawili valley.

“I thought the movie was excellent and gave HSL-37 and the entire state of Hawaii a lot of good exposure,” said Chief Aviation Machinists Mate Dwayne Barnes from HSL 37.

Because the film supposedly takes place in Africa, a majority of extras were hired to appear as if they were indigenous to that area. This was in spite of the fact extras came from Senegal, the Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan (among them were six ‘Lost Boys of Sudan’ who are survivors of a group of orphan children who escaped a bloody civil war in which 17,000 children trekked for five years across Ethiopia to Kenya). Several local military members from all branches of service were also selected to be extras.

But for one Navy extra, (retired) AWCS (SW) Randy Gillet, it was a great way to end a Navy career.

“This movie was the last set of



‘flights’ I flew before retiring,” he said. “It was definitely not a bad way to end my time in the Navy.”

He played the part of the ‘door-gunner’ in the lead helicopter, a very visible part.

“I had a really good time,” he said. “The cast and crew were a great bunch of people to work with and treated us real well.”

Overall, members of the audience - both those starring in the film and those supporting them - seemed to feel this war drama was both good for the Navy and enjoyable to watch.

“I believe it was a really good boost for the squadron,” said Gillet. “Everyone who was involved had fun and really enjoyed the final outcome.”

Gillet and many others in the audience mentioned that after seeing the film on the ‘big screen,’ they now anxiously await the release of the DVD.



U.S. Navy photos

Above: Members of the HSL-37 aircrew pose with Bruce Willis and some of the cast and crew.

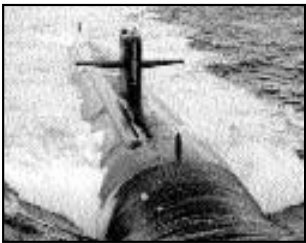
Bruce Willis kisses Lt. Jennifer Seguin on the cheek during a break from filming.



U.S. Navy photo

“EasyRiders” 60 and 53, two SH-60B “Seahawk” helicopters from HSL-37 based at Marine Corps Base, Hawaii, land during the filming of the movie “Tears of the Sun.” A majority of the movie was filmed on Oahu last spring.

Attack sub receives best galley award



U.S. Navy photo

USS Los Angeles (SSN 688)

COMSUBPAC Public Affairs

USS Los Angeles (SSN 688) was named best attack submarine galley afloat with the 2003 Navy Capt. Edward Ney Memorial Award.

The award is presented once a year to recognize outstanding food service within U.S. Navy establishments. It is named in honor of Capt.

Edward Ney, who headed the subsistence division of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts from 1940 to 1945.

“The Ney award is a significant accomplishment for the supply division,” said Cmdr. Christopher Thomas, USS Los Angeles commanding officer. “For the ship as a whole, the award represents the galley’s dedication to serve the crew. The mess specialists have dedicated themselves to giving the crew their best so the crew can perform their best.”

USS Los Angeles left Pearl Harbor Feb. 11 for a six-month deployment to conduct missions in support of the global war on terrorism or possible contingencies elsewhere in the world.

Run for technology at Lehua Elementary

JO2 Cori Rhea

COMSUBPAC Public Affairs

Volunteer Sailors from Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC) spent the day in the sun March 7 participating in Lehua Elementary’s annual Technology Run (Tech Run).

“The Tech Run is a day of festivities that marks the accomplishments of all the stu-

dents for their efforts in raising money for the school’s computers,” said teacher, Sheri Yoshikawa. “This year the students raised over \$6,000 for new computers and printer equipment.”

COMSUBPAC adopted Lehua Elementary over three years ago and is present at many of their social events.

The Sailors helped organize and monitor games, including basketball, relay races, obstacle courses and the limbo.

“I enjoy spending time with children, especially when it comes to sports,” said Mess Management Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Lilley. “It’s fun to come out here and get to know the kids while improving the command’s relationship with the school.”

“The (COMSUBPAC) Sailors are our best volunteers,” said Yoshikawa. “We can always depend on them to help at all the school events with much enthusiasm and support.”

Sailors honored for specialized skills

Marshall Fukuki

PHNSY & IMF Public Affairs

Ships can’t always pull into a friendly port when something breaks down. In order to remain at sea and perform their mission, deployed ships have to be able to do as much of their own repairs as possible. Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY & IMF) recently honored two Sailors who acquired special-

ized technical skills that will help their ships remain on station.

On Feb. 3, Capt. John Edwards, PHNSY & IMF commander, presented certificates of completion to Hull Technician 2nd Class Rodney Smith of Code 920 and Engineman 1st Class Larry Rafanan, recently of Code 930.

Smith fulfilled job qualification requirements (JQRs) in pipefitting. Rafanan was

certified in diesel engine repair.

“These were very difficult qualifications,” said Chief Machinist’s Mate Kevin Krepps, coordinator for the command’s JQR program. “It takes two to three years to obtain.”

Shortly after the ceremony, Rafanan reported to USS Crommelin (FFG 37) where his technical skills will be a most valuable asset.

North Lane road closed for construction

Sections of north-bound lanes along North Lane Road between Makalapa Gate and NEX gas station will be reduced from two lanes of traffic to one to allow for construction of curbing, sidewalks and landscaping. Adjacent parking areas will also be closed. Construction is scheduled through May 30 with the lane closed between 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Local signs and traffic cones will be implemented during this time.